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3. Does the theory that God hides his face from the wicked and gives prosperity to the righteous represent the facts as you see them?
4. What religious leaders among the Hebrews were the first to make progress in thinking upon this problem?
5. What is the fundamental insistence of Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah concerning conduct?
6. Were the prophets previous to Josiah's death thinking primarily of the nation or of the individual?
7. Why was the death of Josiah a spiritual, as well as a political, blow to the Hebrew nation?
8. When they first went into exile, what questions must the faithful Jews have asked concerning the justice of God?
9. What concerning his power?
10. What concerning his faithfulness to his covenant promise?
11. Who was Habakkuk?
12. What was his question, and to whom did he address it?
13. What was the answer as he conceived it?
14. Tell all that you can about Ezekiel.
15. Why could not the people believe Ezekiel's statements that Jerusalem would surely be destroyed?
16. What theories concerning suffering does Ezekiel seek definitely to overthrow?
17. What new theory does he bring forward as a substitute?
18. What national situations today lead us to think seriously upon this world-old problem?

## SUGGESTIONS TO LEADERS OF CLASSES IN THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY GEORGIA L. CHAMBERLIN

The author of the present course, "The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament," is able to point out to us those passages from historians, prophets, poets, and sages, which contain more or less definite statements of the views of the Hebrew people and their leaders of their philosophy of suffering. It is pre-eminently a religious question with all and inseparably linked with their growing conception of God, and of his relation to the Hebrew people and to the world. These statements, however, can be understood and appreciated only as they are studied in relation to the history that lies back of them. The task of the leader of the class, therefore, will be in great measure to see that his group receives through him and through their own work a keen appreciation of those crises in the history of Israel which caused greatest suffering to the nation and to individuals, and out of the midst of which their theories were evolved. All members of the group should be urged, therefore, to read a brief history of the Hebrew

people—such a one as Wade's *Old Testament History*, Ottley's *A Short History of the Hebrews*, Kent's *A History of the Hebrew People*, or Sander's *History of the Hebrews*. The leader himself will perhaps desire to read more extensively in Hebrew history than he has yet done, with the theme of this course particularly in mind.

Two programs are presented for the meeting of the group. If this meeting is weekly instead of fortnightly, the programs should be divided.

#### PROGRAM I

1. Pictures from Hebrew history; brief sketches of critical periods in the history of the Hebrews in which they passed through experiences of suffering. (Leader.)

2. The situation of northern Israel—political, religious, and social—in the days of Jeroboam II.

3. The picture of northern Israel as presented by Hosea and his theory concerning the cause of her calamities.

4. Conditions in Judah in the days of Isaiah and his theory concerning the cause of her affliction.

5. The crisis in the days of Josiah, and the theory of the Book of Deuteronomy.

*Question for discussion:* In the suffering which you see about you, what proportion does it seem to you could legitimately be called punishment for sin?

#### PROGRAM II

1. The first great deportation of the citizens of Jerusalem to Babylonia and its spiritual implications. (Leader.)

2. The problem of Habakkuk and the conclusion at which the prophet arrived.

3. The conditions, physical and spiritual, of the Hebrew people in the first stages of the exile, especially of those who were faithful to Jehovah.

4. Ezekiel's theory concerning the cause of Israel's suffering in exile.

5. Ezekiel's ideal of Jehovah and his relation to the individual.

*Question for discussion:* Have we in the twentieth century gone too far in our theory of the relation of God to the individual, and failed in our emphasis upon groups of individuals as having corporate conscience, ideals, and responsibilities?

#### REFERENCE READING

Henry Preserved Smith, *Old Testament History*; Wade, *Old Testament History*; Ottley, *A Short History of the Hebrews*; Kent, *A History of the Hebrew People*; Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*; Peake, *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, pp. 1-33; J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophet and His Problems*, chap. vii; Badé, *The Old Testament in the Light of Today*, chaps. v-viii.